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20 MARCH 1956

BACKGROUND--THE SATELLITES

- I. Ideological shifts and policy pronouncements of Soviet 20th Party Congress have made deep impression on Eastern European communist leaders, and have given heart to opposition elements in Satellite parties. Effect of the Congress will continue to be felt in the Satellites for months to come.
 - A. Congress indicated that effective Soviet control of Satellites will be maintained, although in more subtle and less offensive forms.
 - B. Problems which may arise as result of Congress will come from Satellite parties' reactions to new Soviet lines: ie, the "many roads to socialism" concept, the cancellation of the "cult of personality" (and the associated denigration of Stalin), and reaffirmation of the principle of "collective leadership."
- II. Although initial Satellite response to new Congress dogma has been extremely cautious, line is now beginning to appear.
 - A. Reactions stress applicability of Congress decisions to specific Satellite economic and industrial plans;
 - B. Echo Soviet statements on "cult of personality" and Stalin, condemn one-man control and hero-worship.
 - C. Applaud view of "many roads to socialism."
 - D. Assert that, with 20th Congress, renaissance of Leninism has been achieved.

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III. Within Satellite parties, however, already some evidence that Congress pronouncements have aggravated existing dissidence, factional disputes.

A. In Hungary, nationalist elements in party central committee apparently feel strengthened: reportedly are strongly supporting ex-premier Nagy's petition for "rehabilitation."

1. Recent Pravda article praising pre-war Communist leader Bela Kun, plus reports that a revision of 1949 trial of national deviationist Lazlo Rejk is intended, have probably encouraged rightist party elements to believe their position is correct and that time is running out on Rakosi.
2. Rakosi's defensive tone in his report to Hungarian Central Committee on 20th Congress suggests his desire to placate opposition forces within committee.
3. Rakosi admitted problems within Central Committee, but claimed that 20th Congress proved Hungary had followed "correct road" since ouster of ex-premier Nagy a year ago.

B. In Poland, 20th Congress developments also may strengthen opposition group within Party central committee [REDACTED]

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1. [REDACTED] opposition group, comprised of 250 senior officials, is demanding freedom of press and criticism; democratization of party, and a halt to repression of unorthodox views held by party members.

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2. One Polish commentator, broadcasting on home service, said of 20th Congress: "For a long time we have been spoonfed on an insipid, messy hash of slogans," but "the 20th Congress has given the green light to creative thought."

C. In early March, East German Party First Secretary Walter Ulbricht, with typical teutonic heaviness, let go sweeping blast at Stalin.

1. Although other Satellite spokesmen are now openly criticizing Stalin, none have yet done so in such violent terms as Ulbricht, who stated "one cannot reckon Stalin among the classic^{INTERPRETERS} of Marxism" went on to describe the official Stalin biography as "self-flattery" and "misrepresentation of Party history."

2. Again, on 17 March (in speech at East Berlin party conference), Ulbricht let fly: charged that Stalin, despite warnings, failed to make proper preparations for Nazi attack (June '41); that he had made deliberate falsifications of fact in his official biography.

IV. Evidence of dissension has not become apparent in other four Satellite parties (Albania, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria).

A. 20th Congress events were reported fully and faithfully in all four countries; "middle-of-road" interpretation carefully developed, particularly in reference to denunciation of Stalin, and intensive efforts to "explain" Congress to all levels of the party.

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- B. Stalin credited with having done good job in earlier years of rule.
- C. In thirties, however, he charged with making serious errors and mistakes, including violation of principle of collective leadership, with affected both Soviet and Satellite parties.

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